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ABSTRACT

A freshman English program, English 110, was instituted at a large state university with a two-fold purpose: to teach freshman composition more effectively and to use the teaching staff more efficiently. The program was initiated on a two-semester basis and made mandatory for all entering freshmen. After one semester of the new program, an evaluation of the old and the new was conducted by readers who judged randomly selected student essays written at the completion of the two-semester course and of the new one semester course. Analysis of the evaluation revealed that there was no significant difference in the quality of student essays after one or two semesters of freshman English. With the new program, considerable man-hours were saved. (CK)

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The Wisconsin State Universities Consortium of Research Development

Research Report

THE 1967 FRESHMAN ENGLISH PROGRAM AT WISCONSIN STATE UNIVERSITY AT
LA CROSSE

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Cooperative Research

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FINAL REPORT

WSU-CORD
The Consortium of Research Development
Of The
Wisconsin State Universities

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AT WISCONSIN STATE UNIVERSITY AT LA CROSSE

Ronald S. Burman and Lorraine Flaherty
Wisconsin State University
La Crosse, Wisconsin

October 1968

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

Office of Education
Bureau of Research

FINAL REPORT

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Of The
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THE 1967 FRESHMAN ENGLISH PROGRAM
AT WISCONSIN STATE UNIVERSITY AT LA CROSSE

A New One-Semester Course
Saving Manpower and Classroom Space

Wisconsin State University
La Crosse, Wisconsin

October 1968

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

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Bureau of Research

A REPORT OF THE 110 PROGRAM AT WISCONSIN STATE UNIVERSITY
AT LA CROSSE

In the fall of 1967 the English Department at Wisconsin State University at La Crosse instituted the new freshman English program, English 110, with a two-fold purpose: to teach freshman composition more effectively, and to use the teaching staff more efficiently. The English Department had voted to try the program on a two semester basis and to require all entering freshmen to participate in it. The new program replaced the previous two semester, six credit course with a five credit, one semester course. In the new program the students met twice a week in a large assembly for a lecture on the principles and basic theories of rhetoric. For practice in writing and in evaluating both their own and accomplished writings, the students met three hours a week in small sections of twenty-five. At the discretion of the small section instructors, students were requested to report to a writing clinic for individual assistance on mechanical and fundamental problems.

After one semester of the new program, an evaluation of the old and the new was carried out by qualified readers who judged randomly selected student essays written at the completion of the two semester course and of the new one semester course. Analysis of the evaluation revealed that there was no significant difference in the quality of student essays after one or two semesters of freshman English. With the new five

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credit, one semester program considerable man hours were saved. In view of these facts, the English Department voted to continue the new 110 program for one more year.

Central to the English Department's decision to initiate the new program of freshman English was the belief that not all the material covered in the previous two semester course required one teacher in a room with only twenty-five students. the department felt:

(1) that a general presentation of the basics of rhetoric such as sentence structure, paragraphing, and the unity, organization, development, and coherence of the whole essay could be effectively conveyed in large sections of 400-500 students; a lecturer utilizing an overhead projector and transparencies could present in one hour what, under the previous system, required sixteen hours by sixteen instructors;

(2) that specific problems with grammar, punctuation, mechanics, and spelling could best be taught on an individual basis all aspects and levels of such problems; and

(3) that only the direct preparation for writing assigned essays and the discussion of these essays necessitated that one teacher be in immediate contact with twenty-five students. In addition to their own writing, students could read and discuss accomplished, professional essays applicable to the matters in writing with which they were currently dealing.

To test the above theories the department gave the identical examination to all students completing English 102 in May of 1967 and to all students completing English 110 in January of 1968. The examination consisted of an essay from each student. The conditions and instructions were controlled, and the students were informed as to the criteria of evaluation for their examination essays.

On February 3 and 4, 1968, three experienced instructors from the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee read and evaluated a randomly selected group of 80 compositions, 40 of them from English 102 and 40 from English 110. The compositions presented to the readers were mixed in such manner that no 102 composition could be distinguished from a 110 composition. The students' hand-written compositions were typed on separate sheets and supplied to the readers in individual copies; each composition was coded for later identification in the statistical analysis. Before preparation for random sampling, all 102 and 110 compositions were culled for non-productive performances; a non-productive performance was considered any examination booklet containing less than two pages, each page with twenty-two lines, 6 3/4 inches long. Small handwriting on performances slightly under two pages was considered equivalent to two pages of average handwriting. Of the 1076 booklets from English 102, 45 or 4.2% were removed, and of the 790 booklets for English 110, 56 or 7.1% were removed.

Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4 at the end of this report contain the charted results of the evaluation. A look at table 1 (global scores) indicates that the average student tends to perform somewhat better under 110, but tables 2, 3, and 4 support a conclusion of no important or significant differences between the performances for the students in the two systems. Tables 5, 6, 7, and 8 (following the body of this report) contain the same basic information utilized in constructing tables 1 through 4, but their arrangement presents additional insight into the meaning of the scores through a comparative study of rank distributions. Ranking by percentile reveals, in a percentile arrangement, that there was no meaningful difference between English 102 and English 110. The global scores (table 5) indicate that perhaps the average and below average student in 110 performed slightly better than his counterpart in 102; scores of 67, 63, and 60 occurred more frequently and higher in ranking for 110 students than for 102.

Table 9 summarizes the means for 102 and 110. The conclusion of the Professor Ernest J. Gershon, the statistician at Wisconsin State University at La Crosse who computed the T ratios, was to "...accept Null Hypothesis which states that any differences observed are due to chance and are not significant with respect to the treatment involved."

Table 10 shows that, according to the American College Testing scores for freshmen entering Wisconsin State University at La Crosse in the fall of 1966 and the fall of 1967, there was no appreciable difference in the over-all scores of each group. The slight differences in the American College Test scores of the 1967 group over the 1966 group repeated themselves in like proportions within the composition evaluations of the two groups.

From the facts summarized above, the English Department concluded that the 110 program was meritorious of continuation for an additional year before final approval should be voted on by the department.

In discussing the 110 program, the department found four distinct advantages over the 102 program. One, all students were exposed in the large sections to a unified and systematic presentation of the basics of rhetoric. Second, the writing clinic, open eight hours a day, afforded students the ready and facile assistance of a willing staff equipped with ample resource materials. Third, and most important for the students, the instructors of the small sections of twenty-five students were freed of repetitions of generalities of rhetoric and could devote more time to classroom discussion and improvement of student compositions.

The small section instructor bore the bulk of the responsibility in assessing the grades. In the composite grade assigned at the end of the course to each student, the small section grade accounted for 80% of the final grade, and was based mainly on the student's performance in writing. The large section grade was derived from objective tests, and, as the department reasoned, such objectively tested knowledge should play the minimal part in arriving at a composite course grade, or 20%. The writing clinic was viewed as an extension of the small section, for it was at the discretion of the small section instructors that the students reported to the clinic; in this light, the students received either satisfactory or unsatisfactory; an unsatisfactory grade in clinic resulted in the loss of approximately one-half of a letter grade from the final small section grade.

The fourth advantage applies to the department and the general administration of the university, and that is the saving of classroom space, manpower, and funds--without apparent deterioration of the achievement in writing abilities. Compared with the 102 program, the department was able to teach 110 with the following savings:

Classroom space: 32 classrooms freed three hours each week;

Manpower: 4 full-time positions each semester;

Funds: \$16,000.00 for two full-time salaries averaging

\$8,000 for two semesters.

(See table 11 for a detailed statement of manpower-cost savings under the 110 program.)

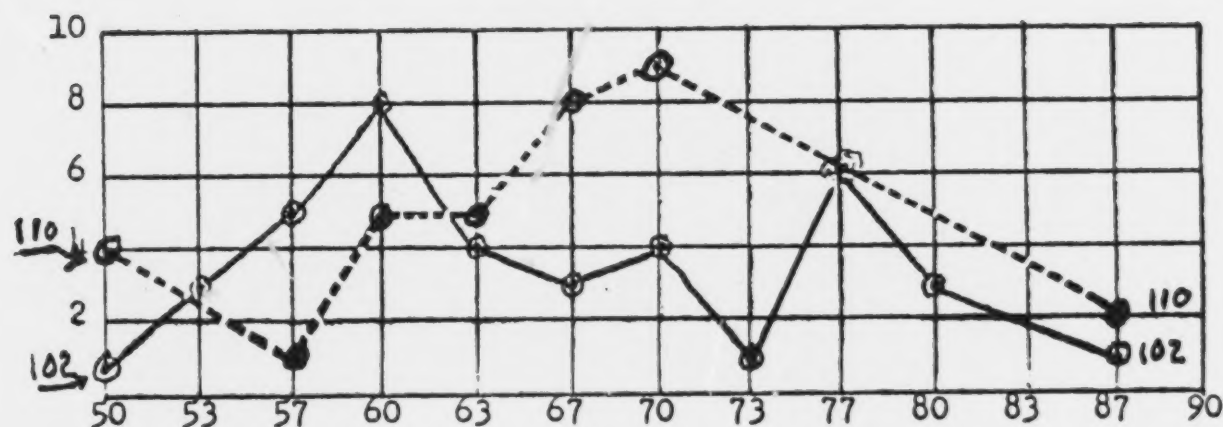
In conclusion, it is the feeling of the English Department that the 110 program instituted at Wisconsin State University at La Crosse has merit, and that similar versions of this type of program might well be attempted at other institutions of higher education. The fact that freshman composition can be taught as effectively under such a program with a considerable saving of manpower, money, and classroom space points up the merit of the program. Moreover, it should be emphasized that the program was evaluated after it had been in operation only one semester. The content and presentation of the large sections were improved during the second semester. Clinic resource materials were expanded considerably, and procedures made more functional. Small section instructors reconsidered methods and began perfecting their new courses. The department feels the new program will continue to improve, and is highly satisfied with the savings in staff hours and in salary expenditures.

(1) GLOBAL SCORES

Frequencies of individual mean scores.

Rating Scale:

- 50 = unacceptable
- 60 = weak, poor
- 70 = average
- 80 = above average
- 90 = superior

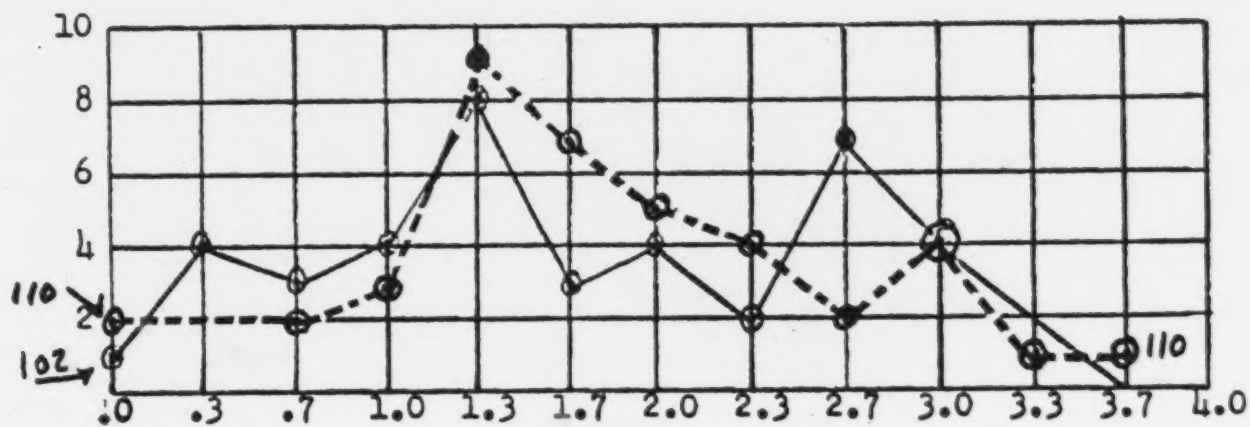


(2) TOPIC CONTROL

Frequencies of individual mean scores.

Rating Scale:

- 0 = unacceptable
- 1 = poor, weak
- 2 = average
- 3 = above average, good
- 4 = superior

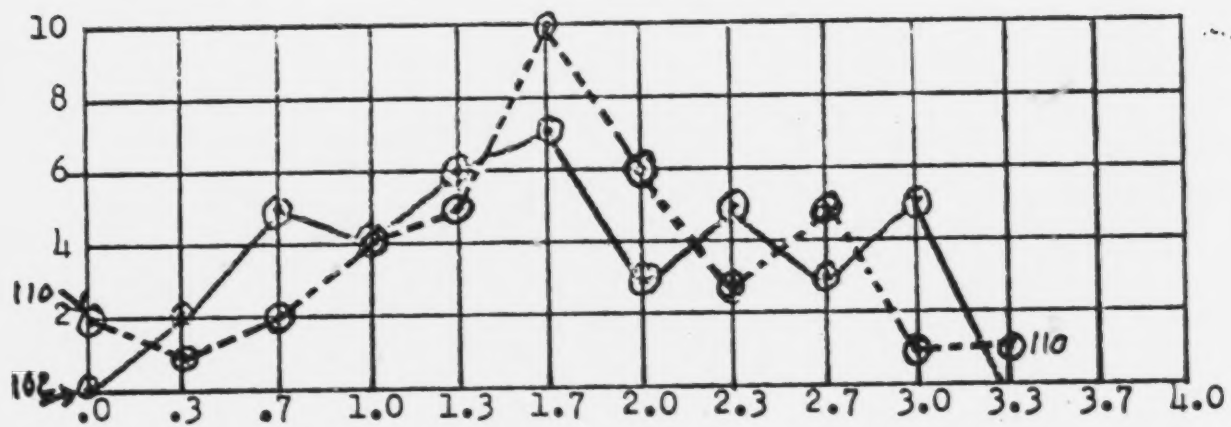


(3)
COHERENCE

Frequencies of individual mean scores.

Rating Scale:

- 0 = unacceptable
- 1 = poor, weak
- 2 = average
- 3 = above average, good
- 4 = superior

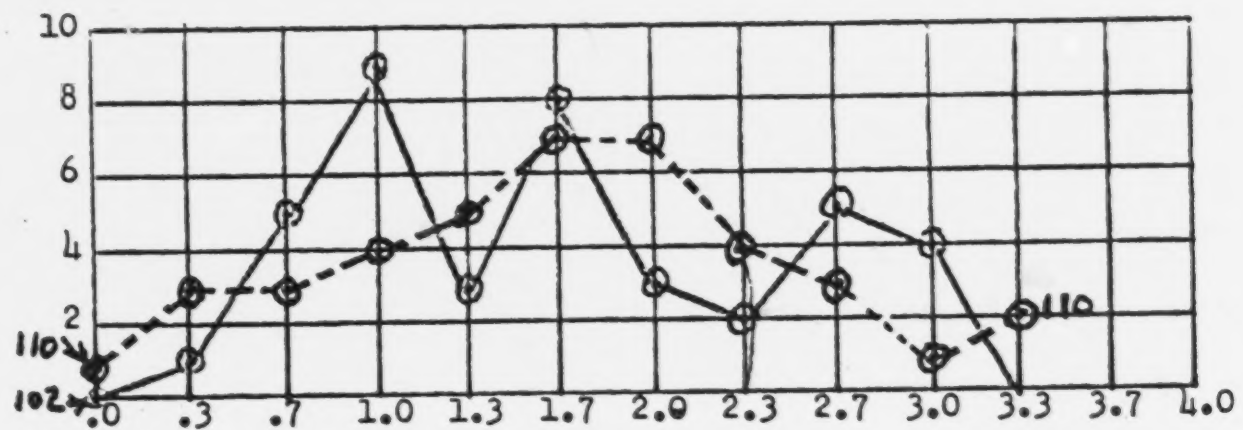


(4) DEVELOPMENT

Frequencies of individual mean scores.

Rating Scale:

- 0 = unacceptable
- 1 = poor, weak
- 2 = average
- 3 = above average, good
- 4 = superior



Evaluation of English 102 and 110 - RANK DISTRIBUTION
High to Low Ranking of Means

(5) GLOBAL SCORES

102 Comp No.	Score	Score	110 Comp No.
16	87	87	21
62	80	87	29
74	80	77	77
14	80	77	73
(10%)			
50	80	77	19
10	77	77	47
48	77	77	11
66	77	77	55
64	77	70	51
20	77	70	7
70	77	70	71
44	73	70	69
(20%)			
18	70	70	67
60	70	70	63
28	70	70	57
54	70	70	27
30	67	70	17
24	67	67	37
2	67	67	13
78	63	67	41
68	63	67	45
40	63	67	49
34	63	67	65
80	60	67	75
72	60	67	79
52	60	63	9
42	60	63	25
38	60	63	31
(40%)			
32	60	63	53
12	60	63	39
8	60	60	1
58	57	60	5
56	57	60	15
46	57	60	33
36	57	60	43
26	57	57	59
(20%)			
76	53	50	23
6	53	50	35
22	53	50	61
4	50	50	3
(10%)			
2649		2674	

Evaluation of English 102 & 110 - RANK DISTRIBUTION
 High to Low Ranking of Means
 (6) TOPIC CONTROL

102 Comp No.	Score	Score	110 Comp No.
64	3.0	3.7	21
18	3.0	3.3	29
16	3.0	3.0	77
10	3.0	3.0	57
(10%)			
74	2.7	3.0	47
70	2.7	3.0	11
66	2.7	2.7	73
62	2.7	2.7	55
48	2.7	2.3	69
44	2.7	2.3	67
14	2.7	2.3	37
60	2.3	2.3	19
(20%)			
50	2.3	2.0	71
78	2.0	2.0	53
68	2.0	2.0	45
20	2.0	2.0	13
2	2.0	2.0	7
72	1.7	1.7	75
42	1.7	1.7	63
28	1.7	1.7	51
80	1.3	1.7	41
56	1.3	1.7	25
54	1.3	1.7	17
36	1.3	1.7	1
34	1.3	1.3	65
32	1.3	1.3	59
30	1.3	1.3	49
24	1.3	1.3	33
(40%)			
58	1.0	1.3	31
46	1.0	1.3	27
40	1.0	1.3	15
38	1.0	1.3	9
26	0.7	1.3	5
8	0.7	1.0	43
6	0.7	1.0	39
76	0.3	1.0	3
(20%)			
52	0.3	0.7	79
12	0.3	0.7	23
4	0.3	0.0	61
22	0.0	0.0	35
(10%)			
66.3		71.6	

Evaluation of English 102 and 110 - RANK DISTRIBUTION
High to Low Ranking of Means
(7) COHERENCE

102 Comp No.	Score	Score	110 Comp No.
74	3.0	3.3	21
66	3.0	3.0	29
62	3.0	2.7	19
50	3.0	2.7	77
(10%)			
16	3.0	2.7	73
70	2.7	2.7	55
18	2.7	2.7	11
10	2.7	2.3	71
78	2.3	2.3	57
64	2.3	2.3	47
28	2.3	2.0	69
20	2.3	2.0	67
(20%)			
14	2.3	2.0	63
60	2.0	2.0	45
54	2.0	2.0	7
44	2.0	2.0	1
72	1.7	1.7	79
68	1.7	1.7	75
48	1.7	1.7	51
40	1.7	1.7	49
34	1.7	1.7	39
30	1.7	1.7	31
24	1.7	1.7	27
80	1.3	1.7	25
58	1.3	1.7	17
38	1.3	1.7	13
32	1.3	1.3	65
8	1.3	1.3	59
(40%)			
2	1.3	1.3	53
52	1.0	1.3	37
42	1.0	1.3	33
12	1.0	1.0	43
6	1.0	1.0	41
56	0.7	1.0	15
46	0.7	1.0	9
36	0.7	0.7	61
(20%)			
26	0.7	0.7	5
4	0.7	0.3	23
76	0.3	0.0	35
22	0.3	0.0	3
(10%)			
68.4		67.9	

Evaluation of English 102& 110 - RANK DISTRIBUTION
 High to Low Ranking of Means
 (8) DEVELOPMENT

102 comp No.	Score	Score	110 Comp. No.
48	3.0	3.3	29
20	3.0	3.3	21
18	3.0	3.0	19
16	3.0	2.7	73
(10%)			
74	2.7	2.7	55
70	2.7	2.7	47
64	2.7	2.3	67
62	2.7	2.3	27
14	2.7	2.3	11
66	2.3	2.3	7
50	2.3	2.0	77
78	2.0	2.0	71
(20%)			
60	2.0	2.0	57
54	2.0	2.0	53
72	1.7	2.0	49
44	1.7	2.0	45
38	1.7	2.0	13
32	1.7	1.7	79
28	1.7	1.7	69
24	1.7	1.7	65
10	1.7	1.7	63
2	1.7	1.7	51
40	1.3	1.7	17
34	1.3	1.7	9
30	1.3	1.3	75
76	1.0	1.3	41
68	1.0	1.3	39
58	1.0	1.3	33
(40%)			
56	1.0	1.3	31
26	1.0	1.0	37
12	1.0	1.0	25
8	1.0	1.0	5
6	1.0	1.0	1
4	1.0	0.7	59
80	0.7	0.7	43
52	0.7	0.7	15
(20%)			
46	0.7	0.3	61
42	0.7	0.3	35
22	0.7	0.3	23
36	0.3	0.0	3
(10%)			
66.4		66.3	

(9)
SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT MEANS

	ENGLISH 102	ENGLISH 110
Grand means (average of averages) of. the GLOBAL SCORES	66.225	66.850
Grand means for TOPIC CONTROL	1.6575	1.7900
Total of composition averages	66.3	71.6
Grand means for COHERENCE	1.7100	1.6975
Total of composition averages	68.4	67.9
Grand means for DEVELOPMENT	1.6600	1.6575
Total of composition averages	66.4	66.3

(10)
ACT SCORES FOR LA CROSSE FRESHMAN CLASSES

	<u>1966</u>	<u>1967</u>
English	19.6	19.8
Composite	20.8	21.0

(11)

STATEMENT OF MANPOWER-COST SAVINGS under new one-semester
Freshman English Program (English 110)

I. Enrollment in English 110, Semester I 1967-68 (the semester
evaluated by the CORD Grant)

Large Assembly	2 sections	$\frac{1}{2}$ position
Small Assembly	37 sections	$9\frac{1}{2}$ positions
Clinic Director		$\frac{1}{2}$ position
Clinic staff	16 clinicians	4 positions
Total Manpower consumed:		$14\frac{1}{2}$ positions

Total Enrollment: 908
Average class size: 24.5

II. Projected enrollment, Semester I 1967-68, offering former
English 101 to entire freshman class

Enrollment:
from English 110 Semester I 908
from English 110 Semester II 716
estimated shrinkage of spring portion 100

Total freshman enrollment for Semester I 1967-68: 1724

Sections of English 101		$17\frac{1}{2}$ positions
at 25 per section	69 sections	$\frac{1}{2}$ position
2 sections remedial English		$\frac{1}{2}$ position
Director of Freshman English		
Total Manpower consumed:		$18\frac{1}{2}$ positions

III. Savings in Semester I 1967-68

A. Of classroom space: 32 rooms in the schedule

B. Of manpower: 4 full-time positions

C. Of salaries (averaging \$8000 per instructor for two semesters): \$16,000